

Sustainability Curriculum Plan 2016-2018

Academic Sustainability Programs Office of the Provost Auburn University

Timeline of development

17 September 2015: Plan drafted by Dr. Nanette Chadwick, Director of Academic Sustainability Programs, and presented for comment to members of the Academic Sustainability Advisory Committee (ASAC), at the annual meeting.

Context: Developed in preparation for Auburn University's submission in early 2016, of credits for a rating in the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment, and Rating System (STARS) of the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE, www.stars.aashe.org), based on credits for Sustainability Planning in the Stars 2.0 Technical Manual [http://www.aashe.org/files/documents/STARS/2.0/stars 2.0 technical manual.pdf](http://www.aashe.org/files/documents/STARS/2.0/stars_2.0_technical_manual.pdf)

ASAC Members: Mike Kensler (Office of Sustainability), Amy Wright (Agriculture), Christian Dagg (Architecture), LaKami Baker (Business), Lisa Kensler (Education), Jeff Fergus (Engineering), Chris Anderson (Forestry), Kate Thornton (Human Sciences), Kathryn Flynn (Interdisciplinary Studies), Giovanna Summerfield (Liberal Arts), Chandana Mitra (Science and Math), Lorraine Wolf (Undergraduate Research), Nathan McWhirter (student representative)

12 October 2015: Revised plan presented for comment to Associate Provost of Undergraduate Studies, Dr. Constance Relihan.

20 October 2015: Finalized plan approved by the Director of Academic Sustainability Programs, adopted as a working plan for the next 3 years, and posted on the program website: http://www.auburn.edu/academic/provost/undergrad_studies/academic_sustainability/index.html

Overall long-term goal

Expose students in all colleges at all levels to sustainability education, through a sustainability literacy requirement for all graduating students, as part of the Auburn University Core Curriculum.

Short-term goals, to achieve over the next 3 years (2016-2018)

(A) Sustainability in the core curriculum

Objective #1: Expose an ever-increasing proportion of AU students to an Introduction to Sustainability course, as part of their core curriculum under core Student Learning Outcome (SLO) #8: Students will be informed and engaged citizens of the United States and the world. NOTE: Even though this SLO does not refer specifically to sustainability, it comes the closest of the 11 core SLOs that Auburn currently requires:

<http://bulletin.auburn.edu/undergraduate/generalintroduction/academicpolicies/thecorecurriculum/>

See Objective #4 below, about plans to explicitly include sustainability as a sub-outcome (measure) within this SLO.

Deliverable: Increasing number and proportion of AU students each year enrolled in introductory sustainability courses, with continuing assessment evidence of substantial achievement of SLO8 by those students.

Objective #2: Enhance the sustainability literacy of students in under-represented colleges, to ensure that at least a minimal proportion (“critical mass”) of students in each college become sustainability literate, through enrollment in both introductory and elective courses with sustainability content in those colleges. These courses will be defined as either sustainability-focused or-related courses, according to national standards:

http://www.aashe.org/files/documents/STARS/2.0/stars_2.0.2_credit_ac_1.pdf

Deliverable: Increasing enrollment in sustainability-focused courses that are offered in under-represented colleges, to a percent goal of at least 20% of current students, and 5% of graduating students, each year in each college (and much higher percentages, in some colleges). Expand the sustainability curriculum inventory, to quantify enrollment in each sustainability-focused course, as well as the total number of students who graduate in each college, each year.

Objective #3: Streamline introductory sustainability courses, to accommodate increasing student enrollment, while maintaining instructional quality and using budgeted funds efficiently.

Deliverable: Change HONR 1027 Sustainability and the Modern World, to SUST 2007 Honors Introduction to Sustainability, and offer it during the same time slot as SUST 2000 Introduction to Sustainability. Offer at least 2 sections of SUST 2000 + 1 section of SUST 2007 (Honors version) each semester, with 25-30 students enrolled per section (75-90 students total per semester). Limit assessment in SUST 2007 to SLO8, similar to the assessment scope for SUST 2000 (simplified from currently-assessed SLO 2, 4, and 8 in the honors course). Maintain currently effective teaching structure of 2 co-instructors per section, from complementary science/technical and humanities/liberal arts backgrounds. Set up course schedule in the “large section with breakout” model: joint lecture to all sections on Tuesdays (reducing lecture repetition of lectures in these 2 linked courses), followed by separate discussion/activity session for each section on Thursdays (retaining small group sizes for hands-on student learning). Maintain positive student evaluations and instructor feedback.

Objective #4: Explore pathways to establishing a Student Learning Outcome (SLO) in the core curriculum that focuses on sustainability literacy. This could become a sub-outcome (measure) within current SLO8.

Deliverable: Craft a potential core curriculum SLO that focuses on sustainability, based on examples from other universities. Examine which courses in the core currently could fulfill this SLO, potentially as a sub-outcome of SLO8. Engage in discussions with the Provost Office and Core Curriculum Committee on possible time scales and options for advancing this objective, as part of Auburn University's on-going revision of core SLOs. Create a focus group process for the campus community to participate in crafting this core Student Learning Outcome.

(B) Minor in Sustainability Studies

Objective #1: Maintain a stable, gradually-increasing number of declared minor students, and of students who graduate with the minor each semester, and continue to include students from all colleges on campus.

Measurable: Maintain at least 50 declared minor students each semester, and at least 25 students graduating with the minor each calendar year. Continue to include students from at least 8 colleges in the the minor. Continue efforts to gradually grow the minor through engagement in advertising and recruitment activities, and to ensure minor completion through timely advising and flexibility in minor course offerings.

Objective #2: Enhance the breadth of course topics required for the minor.

Deliverable: Submit an application to the Curriculum Committee for a change the minor requirements, to include 1 elective in each of 3 main subject areas (Society and Markets, Environment, Social Justice), instead of the 2 areas currently required. Monitor student elective choices and their ability complete the minor in a timely manner, based on this change. See course lists at:

http://www.auburn.edu/academic/provost/undergrad_studies/academic_sustainability/student_minor.html

(C) Graduate education

Objective #1: Advance toward the creation of a Graduate Certificate in Sustainability.

Measurable: Examine current graduate-level certificates at AU and at other institutions. Create a proposal and budget for administering this certificate, to include the types and breadth of current graduate courses that could be included, as well as the structure and teaching needs for a required graduate introductory course (possibly as an online course). Present proposal to the Graduate School and Provost Office, obtain feedback about the potential and timeline for the budgetary and administrative changes needed to offer a graduate certificate.

(D) Faculty training and incorporation of sustainability across the curriculum

Objective #1: Continue to offer faculty incentives and workshop training for new and revised course syllabi that incorporate sustainability material.

Measurable: Hold faculty workshop and offer award incentive payments every other year, training >20 faculty in each workshop. Reach the milestone of >150 faculty trained by 2018, up from 106 trained over the past 10 years, 2006-2015 (~10 trained per year).

Objective #2: Continue to expand both the number and proportion of courses with sustainability content in all colleges on campus.

Measurable: Increase the proportion of courses to a minimum of 5% in all colleges, and maintain the currently high levels in some colleges (30-50%, see inventories at: http://www.auburn.edu/academic/provost/undergrad_studies/academic_sustainability/inventory2015.html).

Offer special incentives and/or discipline-focused training workshops for faculty in low-proportion colleges. Continue to increase the campus-wide percentages and numbers of courses at each 3-year assessment, in part as a result of faculty training workshops, to diffuse sustainability throughout the curriculum.